

who make their home, car, and businesses more energy efficient.

House Republicans stand ready and willing to help American families combat the increased costs of energy. I invite my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us.

#### CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT TO RESCIND HIS VETO THREAT OF MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to urge the President to reconsider his veto threat of H.R. 6331, the broadly supported Medicare improvement legislation that was passed by this House on June 24. It is my hope that the other body takes quick action to pass this responsible legislation. The Medicare beneficiaries and veterans who are enrolled in TRICARE are depending on this physician payment fix becoming law.

If this legislation is not passed into law, millions of Americans will no longer be able to visit their physicians and receive the regular quality care that they rely on. I understand that some Members of the Congress have concerns about the pay-for in this legislation. However, this Congress and this government cannot continue to pass the buck on fiscal responsibility whenever we are faced with difficult choices.

I believe we have found a responsible way to pay for the physician payment fix that is in the best interest of all Medicare beneficiaries. And again, I urge the President to rescind his veto threat.

#### A FEW FACTS ON ENERGY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, here are a few facts on energy I would like to share. America currently has an estimated 175 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.1 trillion barrels of oil that is off-limits to exploration. In ANWR alone, there is an estimated 10.4 billion barrels of oil. Currently 85 percent of the lower 48 Outer Continental Shelf energy resources remain under the lock and key of the Federal Government. Only 6 percent of the 700 million acres of federally owned subsurface mineral estate has been leased for oil and gas exploration.

The estimated Federal revenue that would be generated by opening up these lands that are currently off-limits to leasing is upwards of \$60 trillion. Americans support exploring for these resources and breaking America's dependence on foreign oil. The American people are demanding Congress take action. That is why House Republicans

will continue to fight for an all-of-the-above energy plan that will produce more American-made energy while investing in alternative fuels and promoting conservation.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

#### RECOGNIZING THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, Congress came back this week from celebrating our Nation's Independence Day. This is a special time to reflect on America's difficult history and the true essence of what she stands for. Since the beginning, America has thrived on the contributions of its immigrant labor force. Sadly today, the positive contributions of the immigrant labor force to our society are too often unnoticed.

Hardworking families contribute daily and pay their share into the American system. Hardworking mothers sometimes work three jobs, give up their weekends, and take overtime and night shifts to feed and clothe their children. Hardworking fathers wake up at 4 a.m. to go to work, earn below minimum wages, and manage to provide for their families.

Immigrants contribute in taxes from their paychecks just like the next person through shopping at a variety of stores, restaurants, and gas stations. In fact, the IRS reported that between 1996 to 2003, immigrants contributed \$50 billion in Federal taxes.

We cannot afford to ignore the figures, and more importantly, we cannot afford to ignore the positive contributions of immigrants in America. We need comprehensive immigration for the security of our Nation.

#### MORE CONSERVATION AND MORE DRILLING IS NEEDED FOR OUR ENERGY PROBLEM

(Mr. KELLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the problem of skyrocketing gas prices. We must reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Our constituents deserve straight talk on this issue and here it is: The main component of the price of gasoline at the pump is crude oil. Crude oil is a commodity governed by the law of supply and demand. Therefore, we must reduce our demand and increase our supply.

We should reduce our demand by having tax incentives for hybrids, raising fuel efficiency standards, and investing in alternative renewable energy sources like wind, solar, biomass, and nuclear. We must also increase our domestic supply of oil. We can do that by drilling in Alaska, drilling in the gulf of Mexico, and building more refineries.

The straight talk is we need a comprehensive approach of more drilling and more conservation to achieve long-term energy independence.

#### JOB LOSSES CONTINUE FOR SIX CONSECUTIVE MONTHS AS ECONOMY GETS WORSE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, every month this year the Bush economy has lost more jobs than it has created. In June, 62,000 jobs were lost bringing the total number this year to 428,000 jobs lost. Yet President Bush and some Washington Republicans continue to contend that our economy is not in a recession. These job numbers were particularly devastating to the 3.8 million workers who have lost their jobs and continue to struggle to find new work. It's difficult to find a job when the economy is simply not producing them.

That's why the Democrats fought hard to pass legislation to extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks to more than 1.6 million Americans who have been hurt by President Bush's economic policies. This money will allow workers in my home State of New Jersey and throughout the Nation to pay their bills and put food on the table while they continue to look for a job.

Extending unemployment insurance is just another example of how Democrats are changing the way business is done in Washington. No longer are the needs of working families forgotten in this Congress.

#### SAME OLD EXCUSES WON'T WORK ANY LONGER

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that the American people have been begging, literally begging this Congress to act on the energy crisis, all we've heard from the majority are excuses for why we cannot access our own domestic supplies of energy. They say that we cannot drill in the ANWR because it will adversely affect the caribou. This despite the fact that the caribou have literally flourished along the north slope of Alaska since the introduction of the pipeline.

They say we cannot drill offshore because of environmental threats. This despite the fact that offshore platforms in the Gulf of Mexico have survived both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with very limited or no environmental damage.

The majority continues to offer excuse after excuse but offers nothing to the American consumers who want some relief at the pump. With gas prices crashing through \$4 per gallon

now and rising at an alarming rate, the time for excuses is over. It is time for action. Many of us saw this coming and have tried to expand supply here at home.

It is time for the majority to recognize this fact and show more concern for the American consumers than for the caribou.

#### DEMOCRATIC SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR OIL CRISIS

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the "Lee Elci Show," in New London, Connecticut, Bill from Groton called in while I was on and informed us that to lock in for next winter in Connecticut, it costs now \$5.80 a gallon.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about the hardship of high gas prices. If home heating oil stays at those levels, there will be a catastrophe this winter in terms of keeping people alive because they cannot afford those prices. All of the proposals we've heard from the other side are going to take 20 years, even if it goes perfectly according to plan. People need relief now.

President Bush, with one stroke of the pen, could release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We would have more oil into the market in 13 days. That's the type of short-term relief that consumers, particularly in the northern parts of this country, need if they are going to survive this winter.

We doubled the size of energy assistance in the Democratic budget. The Bush plan would have cut energy assistance incredibly given the fact that these prices are going through the roof. We need Democratic priorities to provide short-term relief and long-term solutions for the American consumer.

#### AMERICA NEEDS TO DRILL NOW

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the frustration my constituents feel with a Congress that refuses to address the current energy crisis. I have heard they can't fill their tanks, they're not doing any extras, they're not going out to eat or to movies or on vacation. And last week, a young woman serving in Afghanistan asked me to make sure that gas is not \$5 a gallon when she returns home.

Repeatedly, people have asked me to drill now. And yet with all this frustration and economic hardship, the Democratic leadership of this Congress refuses to bring legislation to the floor that addresses the number one concern of our constituents: increasing domestic supply now, dropping gas prices now while we move to the alternative energies of the future.

This week Congress will consider dozens of suspensions, a bill concerning the preservation of White House e-mails, a bill creating a national historic trail in New York, and a bill creating a new section of national wild and scenic rivers in Massachusetts. But nothing to lower gas prices.

#### CONGRESS WILL CONTINUE TO FIND REAL SOLUTIONS INSTEAD OF CASTING BLAME

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, Congress continues to take action and do everything we can to reduce the price of gas at the pump. Because of legislation this Congress passed last week, as of last week there are over 70,000 more barrels of oil per day every day that are going into the market instead of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And during the last week, the price of oil per barrel went down.

We also approved legislation that gives U.S. authorities the ability to prosecute anti-competitive conduct committed by international cartels like OPEC that manipulate the price of oil.

We passed legislation that would invest in biofuels rather than corporate welfare for Big Oil. Energy experts estimate that biofuel blends are keeping the price of gas approximately 15 percent lower than it would otherwise be right now.

This Congress has taken action to address the skyrocketing price of gas, and we will continue to find real solutions rather than pointing fingers and casting blame.

□ 1030

#### AMERICANS HELD HOSTAGE IN COLOMBIA

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, for the last 5 years, civilians Keith Stansell, Thomas Howes, and Marc Gonsalves have been held hostage and bound by chains in the jungles of Colombia. Their captors were the Communist thugs: FARC.

The three American captors lived in constant fear and squalor along with hundreds of other hostages, mostly Colombians. These three men were held longer than any other American citizens currently being held captive in the world.

They also had 5 years of their lives stolen from them. During the last 5 years, they were unaware of most world events, including the birth of Stansell's twins, the invasion of Iraq, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Red Sox breaking the curse and winning the World Series, gasoline prices tripling, and the University of Texas defeating Southern Cal in the Rose Bowl for the National Championship.

FARC is an insurgent terrorist group that funds its activities by working with the drug cartels and kidnapping people and holding them for ransom.

But thanks to the people and the Government of Colombia, the three Americans and 20 others were rescued from the outlaws in a stealth, covert operation. We are glad the Americans are home, and our gratitude goes to the people of Colombia.

And that's just the way it is.

#### ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF STAND DOWN HOUSE

(Mr. KLEIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the contributions of an extraordinary organization in my congressional district: the Stand Down House.

The Stand Down House and its dedicated staff provide support and services for homeless veterans, including transportation, counseling, and job training. These honorable servicemen have fallen on hard times and need a place to stay and a chance to get their lives back on track.

The Stand Down House provides exactly that chance, and it is a lifesaver for many of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 200,000 homeless veterans in America today, and up to 2,000 in Palm Beach County alone where I live.

We must never turn our backs on a single one of our servicemen, and I commend the Stand Down House for serving those who have served our Nation.

#### ENERGY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in a story from The Hill newspaper yesterday, a Democrat staffer is quoted as saying House Democrats' strategy on the issue of skyrocketing gas prices is to "drive small cars and wait for the wind."

What a terribly insulting idea to the American people who continue to suffer as the price of gas soars over \$4 a gallon.

The truth is, I know there are plenty of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who would support reasonable bipartisan legislation to increase American production of oil here at home.

Unfortunately, the Democrat leadership controls the floor agenda, and the same article notes that Democratic leadership is terrified their Members might actually support legislation that would open up exploration in the deep waters off our coasts or in ANWR.

It's time for the Speaker to let the Members of this body do their job and represent their constituents' desires and drill for American oil.